

Macrae steers Wycombe into second round

Report by STUART EARP Oxford City 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1

AN opportunist goal by young striker Bruce Macrae steered Wycombe Wanderers through to the second round of the Rothmans Isthmian League Subsidiary Cup at Oxford City on Wednesday night. The Blues now take on Boreham Wood from Division Two at Loakes Park.

Macrae's goal brought a ray of light to an otherwise dull and somewhat physical game, played on a poor surface. Wycombe seldom do well at the White House ground and this performance was in keeping with displays in recent years.

Nevertheless, there were one or two encouraging signs from this encounter. Not the least of these was the performance of Macrae, whose brother Bob used to play for Oxford before emigrating. Bruce did well at Sutton last Saturday and staked his claim for a run in the team with another gutsy show. His control needs tightening, but he has plenty of heart and a good left foot.

It would be unfair to say he is the answer to Wycombe's plight up front. He isn't. But given time, he could progress into a more than useful striker — and they are hard to come by these days.

HEARTENING

Terry Reardon's midfield performance was also heartening while the defence looked more solid than at Sutton last week. As a team, however, there was still a lack of cohesion between the three departments.

Howard Kennedy was narrowly wide with a volley after eight minutes as Wanderers began confidently but Oxford fought their way into the game with their own brand of football — lots of running and hard work and yet few attacking ideas. They clipped the crossbar after 15 minutes and two minutes later Jack Woodley forced Peter Spittle to his knees with a shot on the turn.

The shrill whistle of referee Martin and two effective offside traps meant a frustrating evening for the fans and the game was seldom allowed to flow due to a series of errors from both sides. The high bounce of the ball didn't help matters and both teams had to revert to kick and rush tactics at times.

John Delaney, a constant danger at set pieces, headed through for Geoff Anthony after half an hour but Peter Harris saved at the foot of a post. Before the break, Reardon brought a much needed touch of class to the game with a 20 yard shot just wide after a 1-2 with Kennedy.

Both sides swapped corners at the start of the new half but it was Oxford who carved out the first chance, the veteran Woodley sending a drive high and wide when well placed. Poor distribution wrecked many attacks from each team before Wycombe began to put their game together with more conviction.

A fine ball from

Anthony put Tony Horseman through but Harris dashed to block, and hold, the shot at point blank range. Then, with 69 minutes gone, Wycombe went ahead. Kennedy took a quick free kick and curled the ball over a defender to Horseman. He backheaded on and Macrae pounced to clip the ball home a split second before Harris arrived on the scene.

Wanderers finished the stronger side in the closing stages and after Dave Alexander had replaced the tiring Anthony, the Blues had a great chance

to go two up. Mick Holfield, playing against his old club, steadied himself for a volley inside the Oxford box, but sent his kick high and wide.

Wycombe held out without alarm in the last few minutes for a deserved if unconvincing victory.

OXFORD: P. Harris; W. Tucker, S. Atherton, R. Evans, A. Glass; M. Fagan, E. Metcalfe, P. Dallaway; R. Green, J. Woodley (sub J. Horsley 78 mins), M. Gilligan.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, J. Delaney, D. Bullock; H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, M. Holfield; B. Macrae, A. Horseman, G. Anthony (sub D. Alexander 73 mins).

Referee: J. Martin.
Half time: 0-0. **Goalscorer,** Wycombe — Macrae (69).